

Jeanne Clark: Remembering Jack, continuing to serve

By David A. Mittell, Jr.
Clipper Staff



Jeanne and Jack Clark She who became perhaps Duxbury's most articulate advocate for neighborliness, historic preservation and keeping close the town's relation to the sea grew up Jeanne Webber in Wellesley. This is Jeanne Clark of Surplus Street from 1955 to 2016, and recently of Cove Street.

Jeanne graduated from Wellesley High School in 1945, and neither Wellesley nor the friends she knew have completely left her blood. She went to Connecticut College for Women. By and by she met a Coast Guard

officer stationed at New London who would become the love of her life – Jack Clark.

Jack was from Annapolis, MD, where he grew up loving the sea and the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay. He thrived in Coast Guard life, but not on the prospect of raising a family of an officer's salary of the 1950s. When the time came to resign his commission, he at first went to work too far upland in Massachusetts to his liking. A friend who knew him well suggested he consider an opportunity at Plymouth Cordage Company. He took it, and this is what would bring Mr. and Mrs. Clark to Duxbury.

Serving in the military quickly teaches recruits of all backgrounds how to get along with people. In the Coast Guard (if not before) Jack learned that lesson well. At Plymouth Cordage Company and later jobs, his natural respect for the working man made him the one chosen to negotiate contracts.

When the Clarks bought their house on Surplus Street, their next-door neighbors were Frank and Hazel Chandler, who had built their modest home from a Sears Roebuck kit. Frank worked six days a week at Toabe's hardware store in Hall's Corner. When he wanted to reshingle the kit-house he knocked on the Clarks' door and asked, "Would you mind if I did it on Sunday?" Recalling Mr. Chandler's courtesy prompts Jeanne to say, "This is a microcosm of the country. We are no longer neighbors, just abutters!"

The Clarks have three children: Carol, a teacher at Ethel Walker School in Connecticut; Sally, of Cove Street, director of financial aid at Harvard; and John, of Lantern Lane, a management consultant. There are 10 grandchildren and 12 greatgrandchildren.

When her children had reached a certain age, Jeanne took a position as director of admissions at Milton Academy Girls' School – commuting every long day from Surplus Street. Her public service in Duxbury emerged over several important issues – creating the position of town manager; creating the Duxbury Taxpayers'